

The Mercy of God Almighty, Part 1 - Romans 9:1-5 - July 8th, 2012

- As we commence with this new chapter in Romans we round a corner in that it begins the second of three sections. (Chapters 1-8, 9-11, 12-16)
- I have to warn you that chapter's nine, ten and eleven, will have a very different tone than did the first eight chapters of this Epistle of Romans.
- By that I mean, the Apostle Paul is going to get even more intense if you will or gnarly if you prefer, in this second section dealing with the Jews.

- Now at first glance, chapter nine can seem like it's a little out of place in the sense that Paul seemingly goes from being giddy, to being grumpy.
- One could arguably conclude that Paul could be perceived as being moody by virtue of how diametrically opposed chapters eight and nine are.
- However as we see the heart of Paul, get to know the mind of Paul it not only does fits perfectly it flows seamlessly in how it all comes together.

I think Jon Courson described it best in his commentary this way; "Romans 9-11 is essential to the flow of the rest of the Book of Romans because Paul uses the Jew as an illustration of the faithfulness of God. In chapter 9, God's past dealings with Israel show His sovereignty. In chapter 10, God's present dealings with Israel show His equity. In chapter 11, God's promised dealings with Israel show His integrity."

- By the way, chapter nine will not be one of the easiest chapters in the Bible to understand. If the truth be known, it is actually one of the hardest.
- This explains why some pastor's skip chapters nine through eleven. They do so under the banner of their being both boring and uninteresting.
- I realize that by saying that, some of you are already discouraged, wishing that I too would skip these next three chapters for the same reasons.

- Well, let me encourage you by suggesting that if we will but give the Holy Spirit permission, this chapter can come alive, and change our lives.
- By way of introduction, let me explain how it is that this chapter in God's Word has the propensity to absolutely change us from the inside out.
- Perhaps you'll indulge me for just a brief moment as I list just three practical and personal ways for this to become a reality in our Christian lives.

- First it reveals the secret to how we can truly love people who have rejected us, falsely accused us and who have even gone as far as hating us.
- Second, it levels the playing field as it relates to who God chooses and uses, when it comes to His mercy and grace, regardless of who they are.
- Third, and perhaps most importantly it answers once and for all the question of God's sovereignty related to my salvation being eternally secure.

- It's for this reason that we have chapter 9 of Romans in our Bibles, for it's in this chapter that we have God's answer to these pertinent issues.
- More specifically the issue of salvation by grace through faith not of works, and this salvation comes the same way for Jews and Gentiles alike.
- It's not so much "that" the Apostle Paul is going to address these issues, it's more a matter of "how" Paul is going to address these issues.

- Again, by way of a warning in advance true to form Paul will not pull any punches in that he will address this very bluntly and even very brutally.
- Lest you think that this is unloving on the part of the Apostle Paul, it's important to know that this is part of the culture in the Middle-East today.
- Actually, they respect you for not beating around the bush and just getting to the bottom line, which is why they negotiate the way they do.

- Be that as it may, and with all of that as the backdrop, I think we are now ready to take and tackle the text that we have before us this morning.
- In order to do that I'll take a different approach and sort of summarize these first five verses so as to get a better idea and see the bigger picture.
- It's vital we know the Jews aren't going to like what Paul has to say for a number of reasons chief of which is, Gentiles are saved the same way.

- That's why Paul was accused, as a Jew, of being a traitor. So, he comes right out and says that he loves them so much he would be cursed.
- I'm of the belief that this explains why it is that Paul would come off as being so defensive. He's still a Jew, and so too are they still Jews too.
- They were still God's chosen people and they still had tremendous benefits and advantages as well as privileges that the Gentiles did not have.

- Paul lists these privileges saying that they had the Word of God, the promises of God, and the glory of God, having received the Law of God.
- He even takes it a step further in verse five when he tells them that it would be through the Jew that the Christ would come Who is God over all.
- Incidentally, Romans 9:5 is one of those verses in God's Word that single handedly debunks Mormonism and the Jehovah Witness teachings.

- You'll forgive my cynicism but what part of Jesus being God over all do they not understand. Jesus is the Son of God and Jesus is God the Son.
- The litmus test as to whether they're a cult or not, is do they believe that Jesus is God. If they don't believe that Jesus is God, then they're a cult.
- I am keenly aware that this is an abrupt way to segue into the title for this new series beginning in this new chapter, but here's what I'm thinking.

- If you were to put a caption under this chapter it would have to be God's sovereign mercy thus I've chosen the title "The Mercy of God Almighty."
- I find it interesting that here-to-fore the Apostle Paul has given us a glorious exposition of God's sovereign grace so as to now move to mercy.
- Perhaps better said, the Apostle Paul has prepared us for the sovereign mercy of God, by first introducing us to the sovereign grace of God.

William Newell - "The grace of God has been spoken of in this Epistle often before; but not until these chapters is *mercy* named; and until mercy is understood, grace cannot be fully appreciated."

- I would like to attempt to answer two questions from these first five verses and in so doing get us well on our way to grasping the mercy of God.
- Having said that, I think I'd be remiss to not delineate between Grace and Mercy, so for lack of a better way of illustrating it, I'll use an airplane.
- Grace is God giving me what I don't deserve; Mercy is God not giving me what I do deserve. Absent the grace and mercy wings I'm going down.

1. How can I have a heart for the lost? (Verses 1-2)

- v1 Paul comes out with all guns blazing saying that he speaks the truth in Christ, he's not lying, and his conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit.
- v2 He goes on to say what the Holy Spirit has confirmed as the truth, he has great sorrow and unceasing anguish in his heart concerning them.
- So how is it that Paul could have such an anguishing heart for those who were lost? Answer? By getting his eyes off of the puny and the petty.

Charles Spurgeon hits the proverbial nail on the head when he writes; "Get love for the souls of men - then you will not be whining about a dead dog, or a sick cat, or about the crotchets of a family, and the little disturbances that John and Mary may make by their idle talk. You will be delivered from petty worries (I need not further describe them) if you are concerned about the souls of men . . . Get your soul full of a great grief, and your little grief's will be driven out."

2. How can I love those who hate me? (Verses 3-5)

- v3 Paul continues to expound on why he's anguishing saying, he wishes he himself were cursed for the sake of those of his own Jewish race.
- v4 He says the Jews are the adoptive sons and as such theirs is the divine glory, covenants, receiving of the law, temple worship and promises.
- v5 He then says that theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, Who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

- How is it possible that Paul could say something like this given that his own Jewish brethren had spoken such evil about him and rejected him?
- Answer? He continually prayed for them, and when he prayed for them, he could not remain hurt by them, or even angry at them because of it.
- The reason we know this is because of Romans 10:1; Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.
- This answers a bonus question of why we need to pray, when God already knows what we're praying for. Because prayer changes the pray-er.

- By the way, this was also the heart of Moses in Exodus 32:31-32 where he echoes the same thing as the Apostle Paul here in Romans nine.

Exodus 32:31-32 Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! (32) Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written."

- Right about now, you may be thinking to yourself that this is all fine and dandy, but as a believer, I am neither a Moses nor am I an Apostle Paul.
- So as such, it begs the question of how is it that I'm expected to have that kind of heart for the lost, and that kind of love for those who hate me?
- OK, that's fair, however, while none of us are a Moses or Paul, we have the same Holy Spirit indwelling, empowering, and enabling us to do so.

- Here's the bottom line, God's callings are God's enabling's, in that God will give us the how of the Holy Spirit, to do the what of His Holy Word.
- In other words, God never commands us or calls us to do anything without packaging it with the how of the Holy Spirit so that we're able to do it.
- I'm learning in my own Christian experience that God creates a conducive environment to my obedience. He can't be party to my disobedience.

- Would to God that we are numbered amongst those with a heart for the lost a love for our enemy in obedience to God vis-à-vis the Spirit of God.